MARVEL COMICS
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X-MEN 2099
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HALLOWEEN JACK
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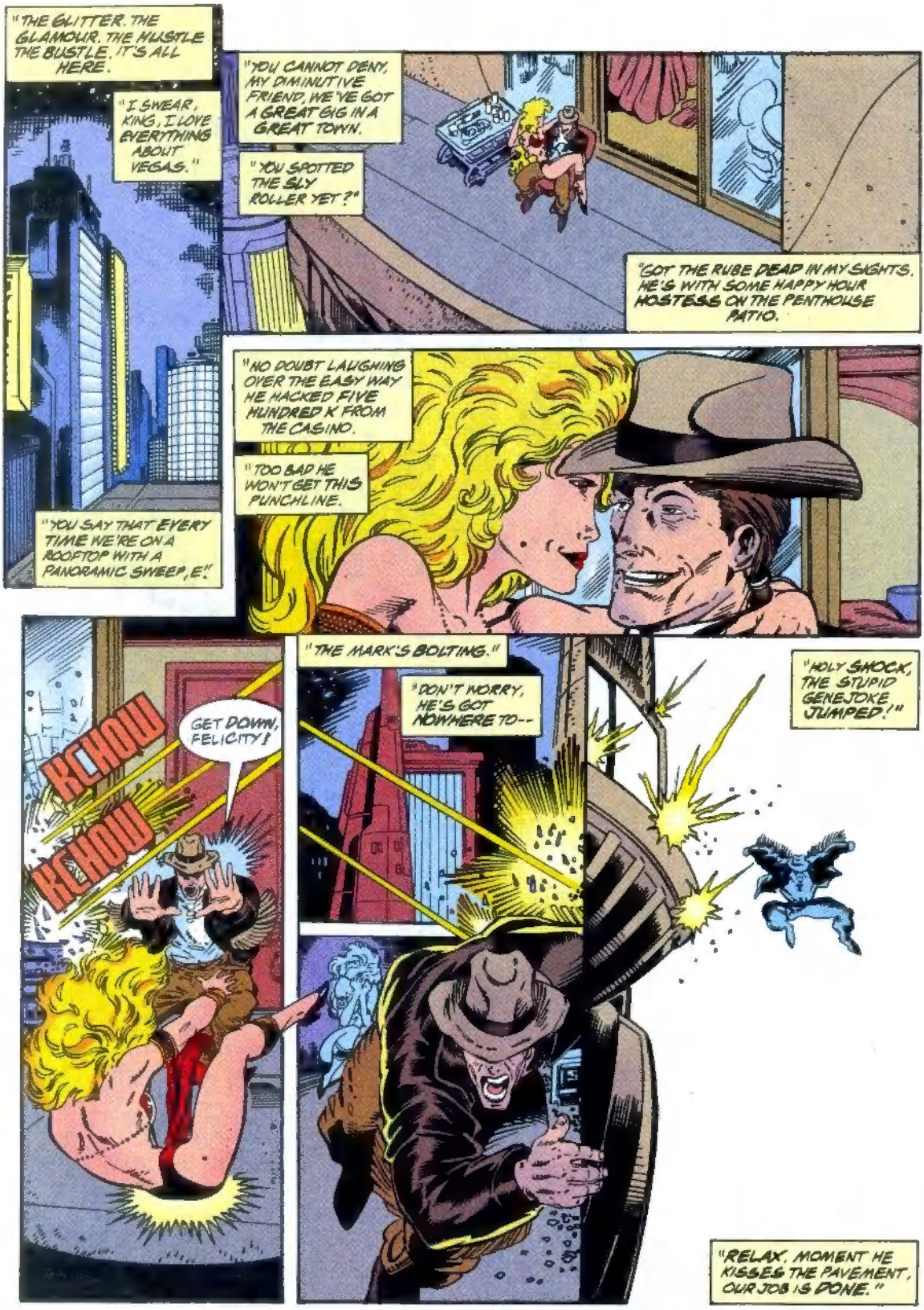
"THE GLITTER. THE GLAMOUR. THE HUSTLE THE BUSTLE. IT'S ALL HERE.
"I SWEAR, KING, I LOVE EVERYTHING ABOUT VEGAS."
"YOU CANNOT DENY, MY DIMINUTIVE FRIEND, WE'VE GOT A GREAT GIG IN A GREAT TOWN.
"YOU SPOTTED THE SLY ROLLER YET?"
"GOT THE RUBE DEAD IN MY SIGHTS. HE'S WITH SOME HAPPY HOUR HOSTESS ON THE PENTHOUSE PATIO.
"NO DOUBT LAUGHING OVER THE EASY WAY HE HACKED FIVE HUNDRED K FROM THE CASINO.
"TOO BAD HE WON'T GET THIS PUNCHLINE.
"YOU SAY THAT EVERY TIME WE'RE ON A ROOFTOP WITH A PANORAMIC SWEEP, E."
KCHOW
KCHOW
GET DOWN, FELICITY!
"THE MARK'S BOLTING."
"DON'T WORRY, HE'S GOT NOWHERE TO--
"HOLY SHOCK, THE STUPID GENEJOK'E JUMPED!"
"RELAX. MOMENT HE KISSES THE PAVEMENT, OUR JOB IS DONE."

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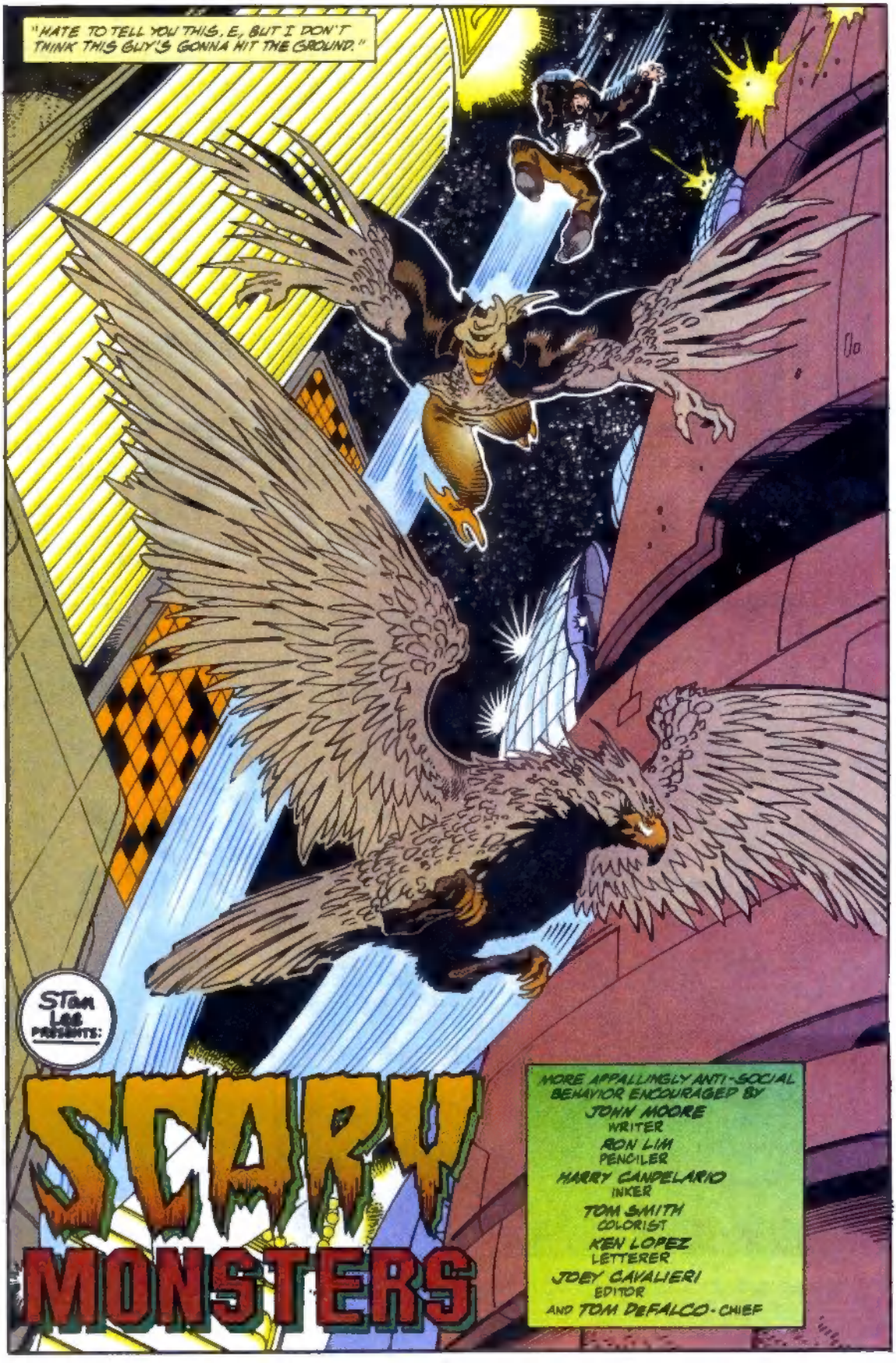
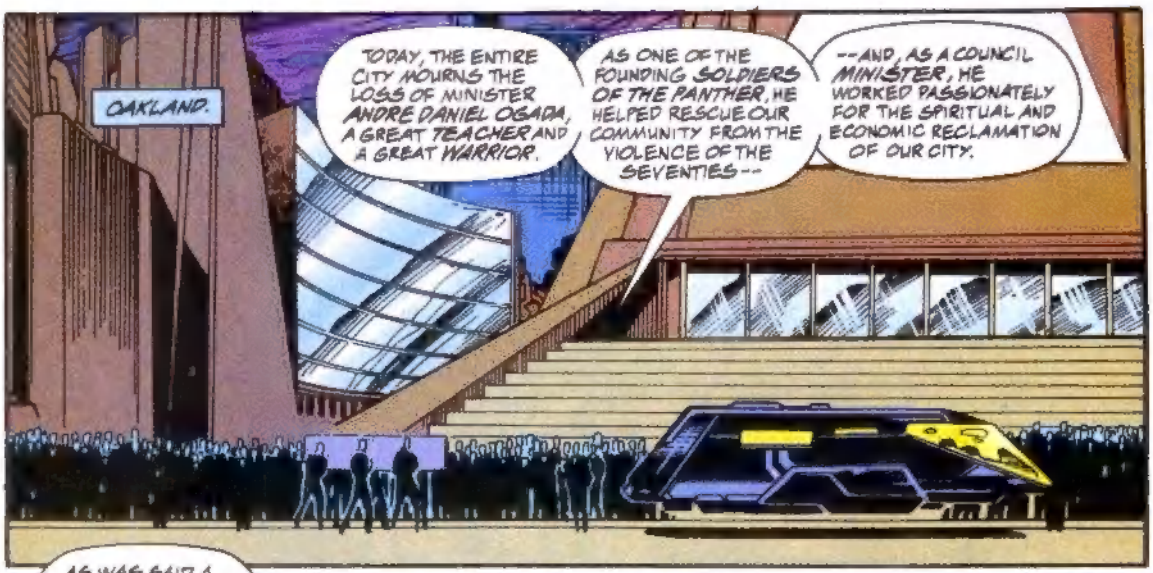

"HATE TO TELL YOU THIS, E, BUT I DON'T THINK THIS GUY'S GONNA HIT THE GROUND."
STAN LEE PRESENTS:
SCARY MONSTERS
MORE APPALLINGLY ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOR ENCOURAGED BY
JOHN MOORE
WRITER
RON LIM
PENCILER
HARRY CANDELARIO
INKER
TOM SMITH
COLORIST
KEN LOPEZ
LETTERER
JOEY CAVALIERI
EDITOR
AND TOM DEFALCO - CHIEF

A SHAPECHANGER? THIS IS ONE TOUGH ACT TO FOLLOW.
NOBODY SAID ANYTHING ABOUT TAGGING A SUPER-POWERED TARGET.
HOW ARE WE SUPPOSED TO DO OUR JOBS IF WE DON'T GET COMPLETELY BRIEFED!?
I CAN'T WORK LIKE THIS.
YOU BETTER LEARN, MON PETIT FRERE, OTHERWISE OUR ALWAYS FABULOUS BOSS WILL HAVE OUR BUTTS IN A SLING.
YOU'RE RIGHT, E. LET'S BAG THAT BIRD.
WHO TAUGHT YOU HOW TO SKY CYCLE, E.?
HELD OVER
THE DEJA VU REVUE
FEATURING
CELESTIA AMBERLYN
WITH THE
VIENNA BOYS'
CILIARY GOSPEL CHOIR
WITH ALL THIS TURBULENCE, I CAN'T GET A BEAD ON THAT FEATHERDUSTER.
USE THE NEURAL SCATTERSHOT.
I HATE IT WHEN YOU'RE RIGHT, E.

NO WAY THAT VULTURE'S GONNA DODGE A HAIL OF SYSTEMSHOCK.
POP
POP
POP
POP
POP
SCRAAAW
I JUST HOPE WE AREN'T EXPECTED TO CLEAN UP THE MESS WHEN IT HITS THE GROUND.
MAN OR BIRD, THAT JAMOKE'S GOING DOWN THE HARD WAY.
SPLORSH


OAKLAND.
TODAY, THE ENTIRE CITY MOURNS THE LOSS OF MINISTER ANDRE DANIEL OGADA, A GREAT TEACHER AND A GREAT WARRIOR.
AS ONE OF THE FOUNDING SOLDIERS OF THE PANTHER, HE HELPED RESCUE OUR COMMUNITY FROM THE VIOLENCE OF THE SEVENTIES--
--AND, AS A COUNCIL MINISTER, HE WORKED PASSIONATELY FOR THE SPIRITUAL AND ECONOMIC RECLAMATION OF OUR CITY.

AS WAS SAID A CENTURY AGO OF THE WAKANDAN PANTHER KING T'CHALLA, WE CAN SAY OF ANDRE OGADA...
"HE FOUGHT RIGHTEOUSLY AND SELFLESSLY FOR HIS PEOPLE--
--BELIEVING JUSTICE AND EQUALITY TO BE NOT SIMPLY PHILOSOPHICAL ABSTRACTS BUT GENUINE POSSIBILITIES."

MINISTER OGADA, PARDON THE INTERRUPTION.
WHAT IS IT, MIKO?

YOUR SISTER IS HERE.

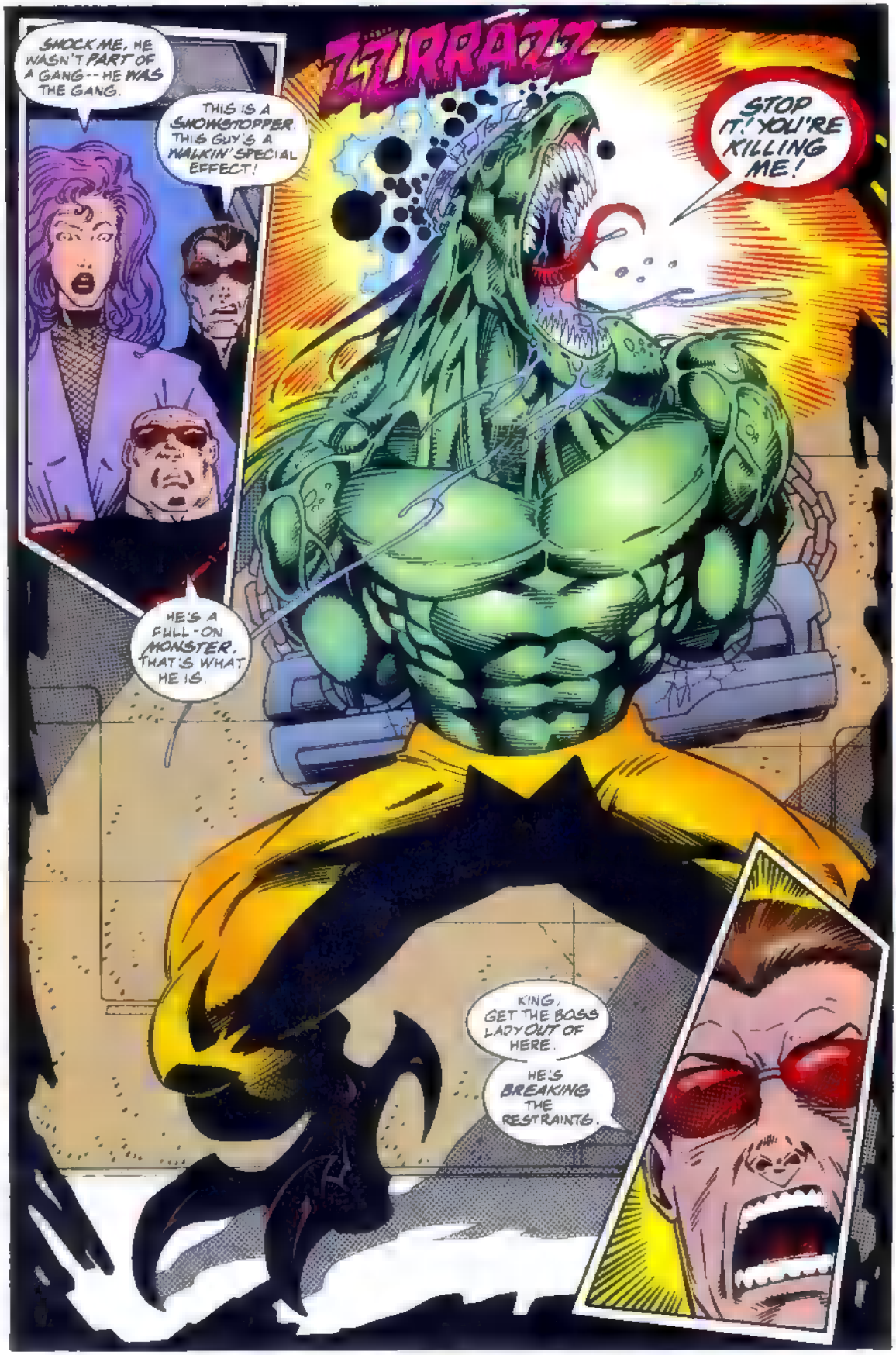
KRYS.
HELLO, ZAK. I'M SORRY WE COULDN'T SEE EACH OTHER UNDER BETTER CIRCUMSTANCES.

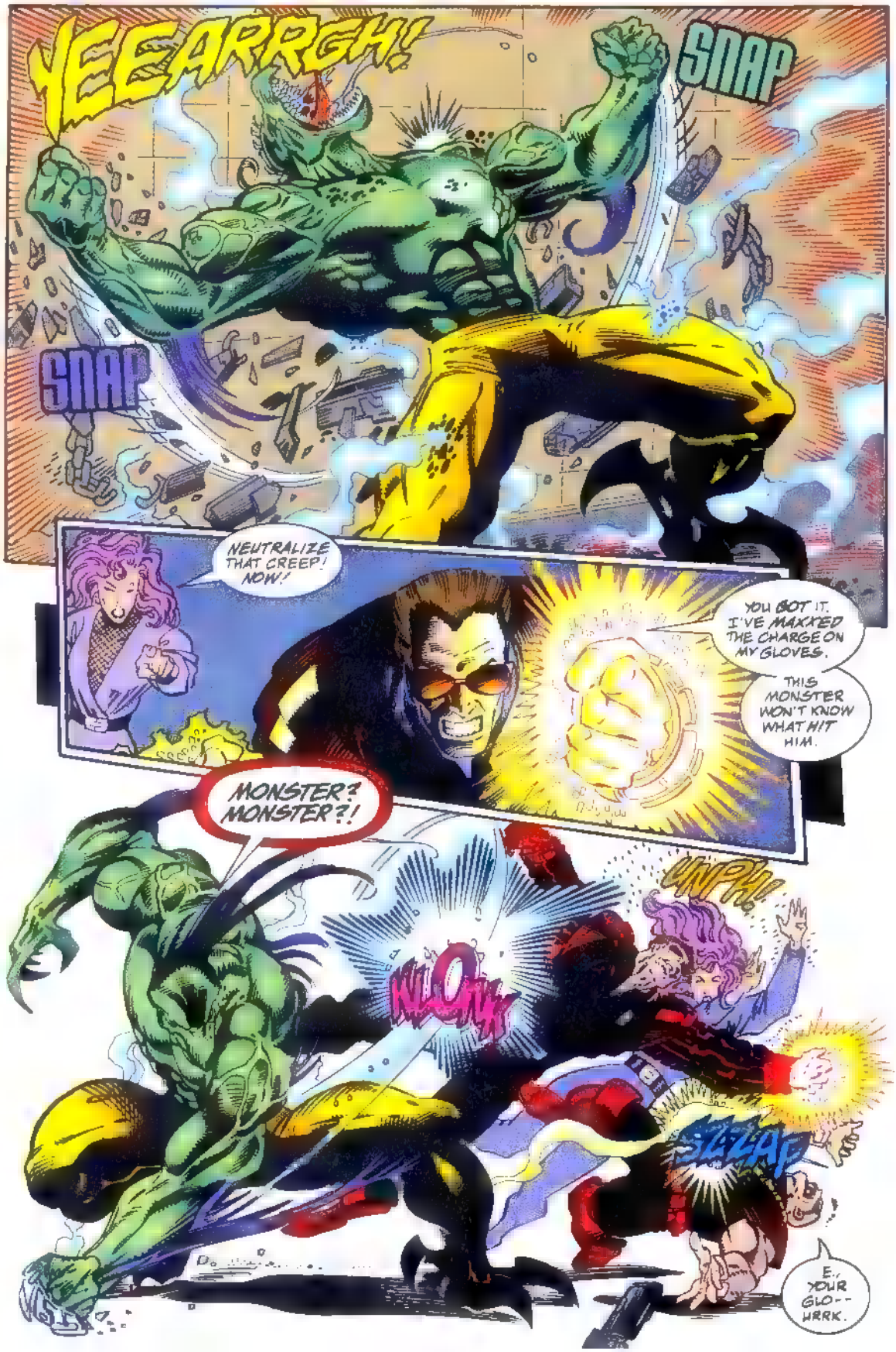
IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE. HE'S REALLY DEAD.
I THOUGHT HE WAS INVINCIBLE.
DID HE ASK ABOUT ME?
ALTHOUGH HE NEVER ADMITTED IT, HE KEPT TABS ON YOU SINCE YOU LEFT WITH HUANG.
YOU SHOULD'VE BEEN AT HIS SIDE, KRYSTALIN.
HE WANTED NOTHING MORE THAN FOR YOU TO STAND WITH THE PANTHERS.
YOU KNOW I COULDN'T DO THAT. I FOUND ANOTHER CALLING.
YOUR DUTY IS WITH YOUR FAMILY, NOT WITH THE MUTANT FRINGE.
THE X-MEN ARE MY FAMILY, TOO.
YOU ARE SO LIKE OUR MOTHER. YOU HAVE NO SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY.
DON'T START, ZAK. NOT HERE. NOT NOW.
BLAST.
HEY, IT'S RAINING. FEELS NICE. I HAVEN'T HAD A SHOWER SINCE I LEFT NEW MEXICO.

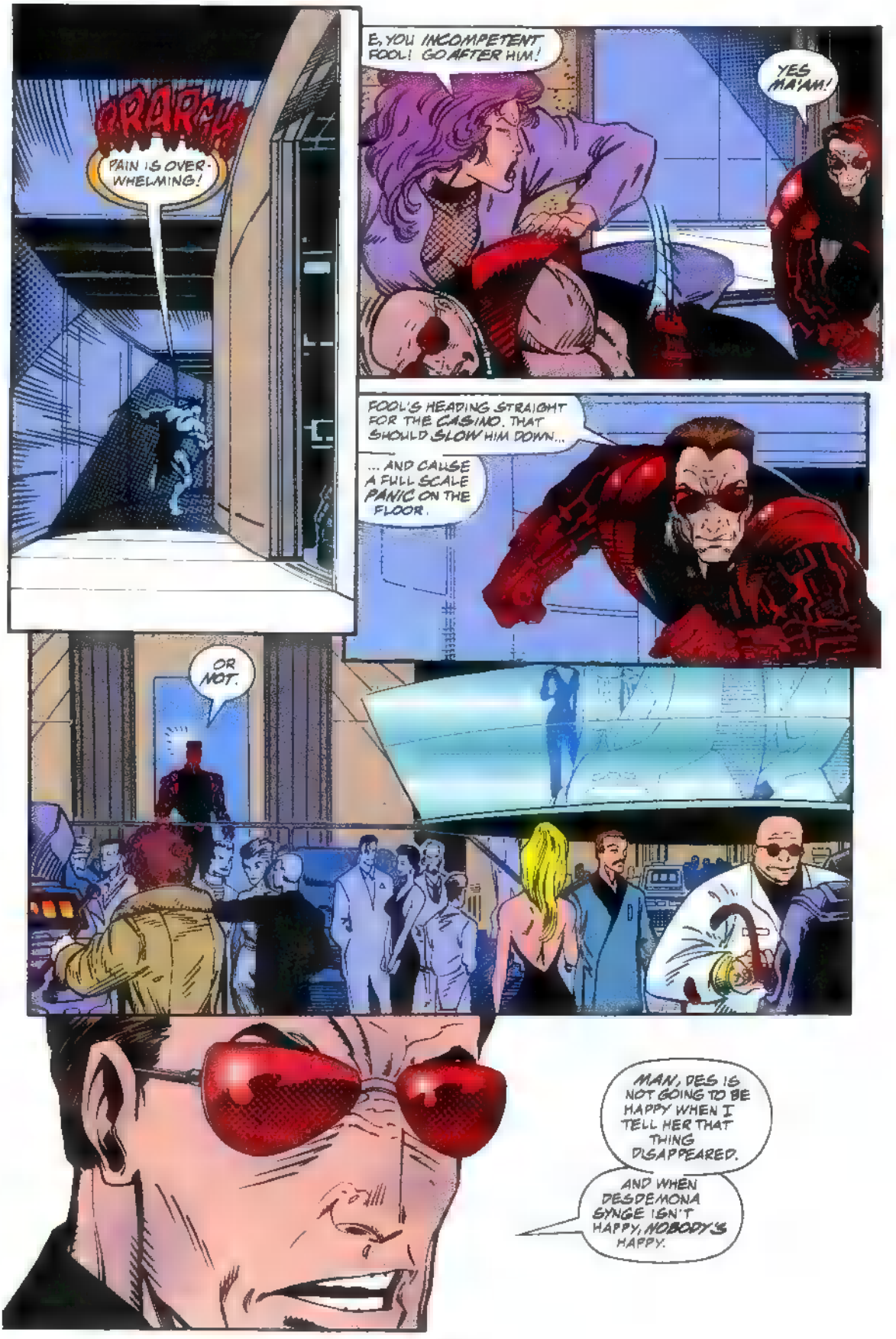
INSIDE THE MOSQUE! NOW!
WHAT'S THE RUSH, ZAK?
IT'S ONLY...
...RAIN?
TOO LATE. HER EYES ARE DILATING.
SHE'S NEW IN TOWN. SHE HASN'T BUILT UP ANY RESISTANCE.
DON'T TRY TO FIGHT IT, SISTER. MAKES IT WORSE.
DON'T TRY TO FIGHT WHAT?
...OOOH...
IT'LL PASS.
HOW DO YOU FEEL NOW?
A LITTLE SHAKY. EXPLAIN WHAT JUST HAPPENED.
YOU HAD A TASTE OF WHAT THE LOCAL WAGS TERM "ACID" RAIN.
THE TECHNO-ANARCHISTS IN THE BERKELEY HILLS HAVE BEEN SEEDING THE CLOUDS WITH HALLUCINO-GENS.
THEY'VE NO RESPECT FOR WHAT THE PANTHERS HAVE BUILT HERE IN OAKLAND.
ONE OF THESE DAYS... SOON... I'M GOING TO PUT AN END TO THEIR MERRY PRANKSTERISM.

THE SUBTERRANEAN LEVELS OF THE SYNGE CASINO AND HOTEL COMPLEX IN LAS VEGAS.
SO, MR. E., WHAT YOU'RE TELLING ME IS THAT NANO-TECH IMPLANTS ALLOW THIS THIEF TO CHANGE SHAPE.
THAT'S THE LOWDOWN, MS. SYNGE, BUT DON'T ASK ME TO EXPLAIN THE COO-COO SCIENCE THAT MAKES IT HAPPEN.
WITH THAT BIRD TRICK, YOU SHOULD PUT HIM UNDER CONTRACT.
BET HE'LL WORK FOR CRACKERS. SHORT.
WHY, DESDEMONA SYNGE. PARTY GIRL DAUGHTER OF THE LATE AND LITTLE MOURNED NOAH SYNGE.
Y'KNOW, THE DRUGS YOUR RATPACK HAVE GIVEN ME TO SLOW ME DOWN ARE PRETTY GOOD.
DID YOU DIP INTO YOUR BROTHER'S PRIVATE RESERVE?
YOU'RE IN NO POSITION TO GET SMART WITH ME.
WE'LL START WITH THE SIMPLE QUESTIONS. WHO ARE YOU?
I AM LOKI, ADOPTED SON OF ODIN, ALL-FATHER OF ASGARD, BROTHER TO THOR, GOD OF THUNDER.
THAT MEANS I'M A GOD, SWEETIE-PIE.
I SERIOUSLY DOUBT THAT.
I THINK YOU ARE ONE OF A GANG OF THIEVES THAT HAS BEEN STEALING THE CASINO BLIND--
--BY USING CHAOS VIRUSES TO ALTER THE SLOT AND TABLE ODDS!
DON'T DENY IT. WE HAVE YOU AND YOUR CRONIES ON DISCCAM.
AS YOU ARE NO DOUBT WELL AWARE, THE PENALTY FOR CHEATING IN VEGAS IS DEATH.
BUT IF YOU RETURN THE MONEY AND IDENTIFY THE OTHERS, WE CAN MAKE THIS LESS PAINFUL.
THERE ARE NO OTHERS. THERE IS ONLY LOKI.

MR. E., OUR GUEST DOESN'T WANT TO COOPERATE. WOULD YOU PLEASE CONVINCE HIM OTHERWISE?
HERE Y'GO, PAL. THIS CRAZY BONNET IS A HOTWIRE HAT, A LITTLE BIO-ELECTRIC BEANIE.
IT'LL TAPDANCE ON YOUR BRAIN'S PAIN CENTERS UNLESS YOU SPILL YOUR GUTS.
IT'S GONNA HURT, JACK.
MY DEAR DESDEMONA, YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHO YOU'RE DEALING WITH.
IF I WANTED, I COULD BRING THIS WHOLE TOWN TO ITS KNEES.
SSSZZKKKZZ
SHUT THIS GUY UP.
AHHHH!
NO... NO... THE CHARGE'S AFFECTING THE NANOTECH IN MY NERVOUS SYSTEM...
...CAUSING A MALFUNCTION...
...I'M LOSING CONTROL...
...CHANGING...

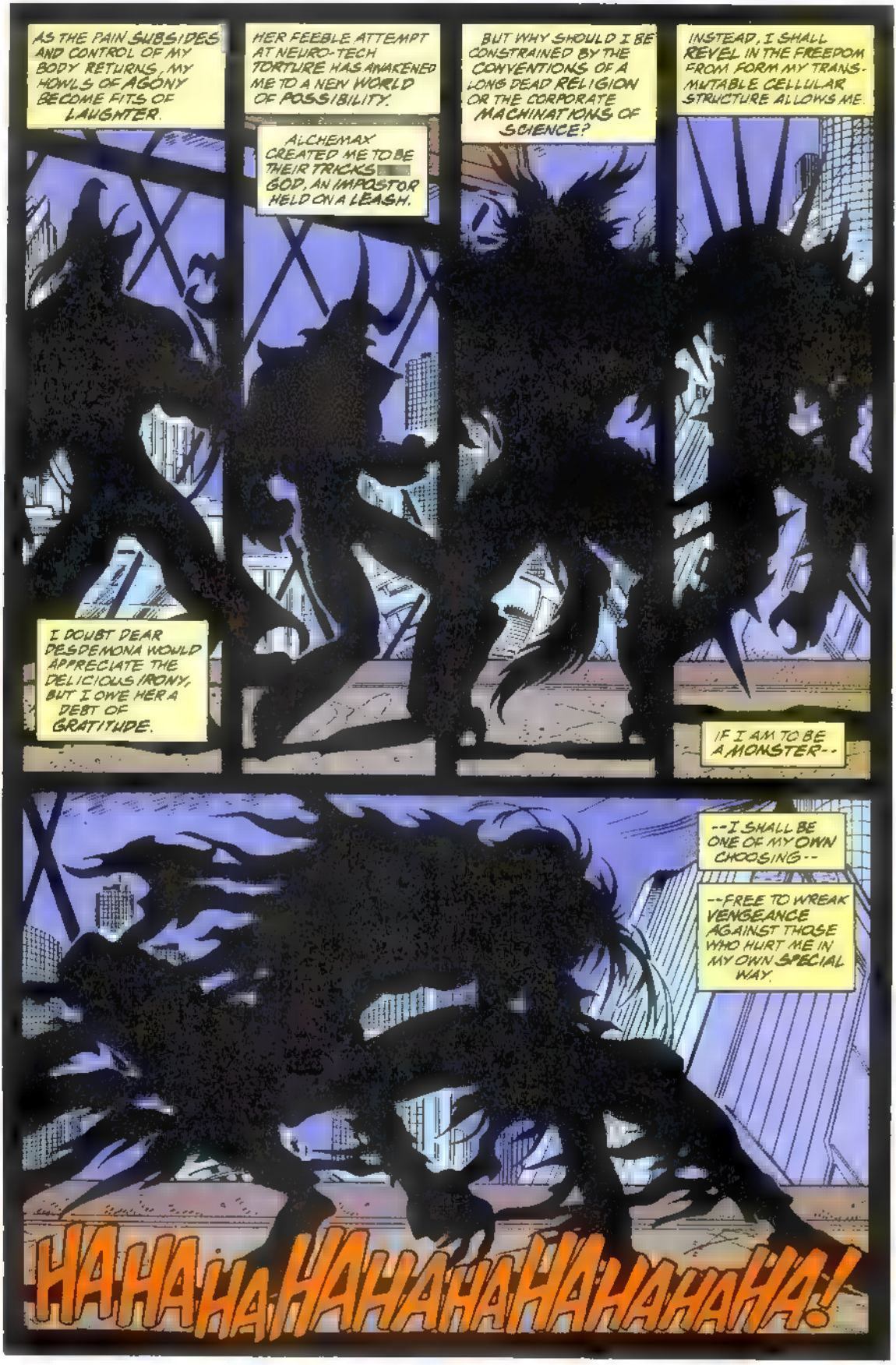

SHOCK ME. HE WASN'T PART OF A GANG -- HE WAS THE GANG.
THIS IS A SHOWSTOPPER. THIS GUY'S A WALKIN' SPECIAL EFFECT!
ZZRRAZZ
STOP IT! YOU'RE KILLING ME!
HE'S A FULL-ON MONSTER, THAT'S WHAT HE IS.
KING, GET THE BOSS LADY OUT OF HERE.
HE'S BREAKING THE RESTRAINTS.

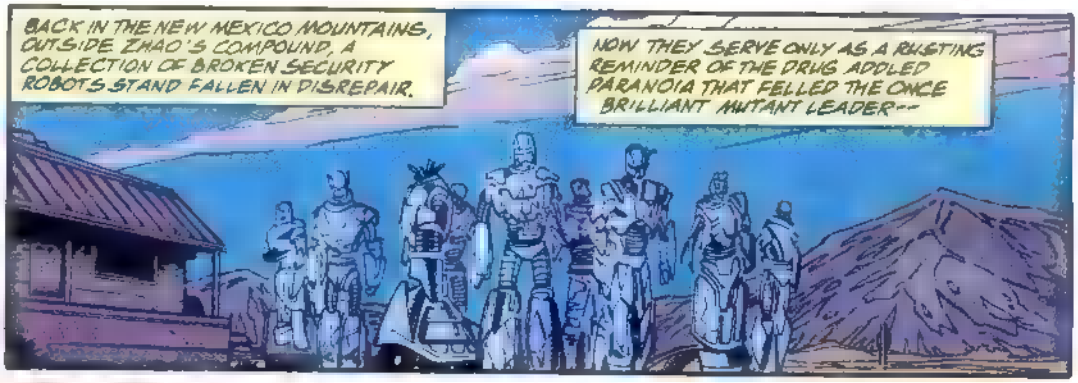

YEEARRGH!
SNAP
SNAP
NEUTRALIZE THAT CREEP! NOW!
YOU BOT IT. I'VE MAXXED THE CHARGE ON MY GLOVES.
THIS MONSTER WON'T KNOW WHAT HIT HIM.
MONSTER? MONSTER?!
UNPH!
KLOW
ZAZAP
E.. YOUR GLO-- HRRK.

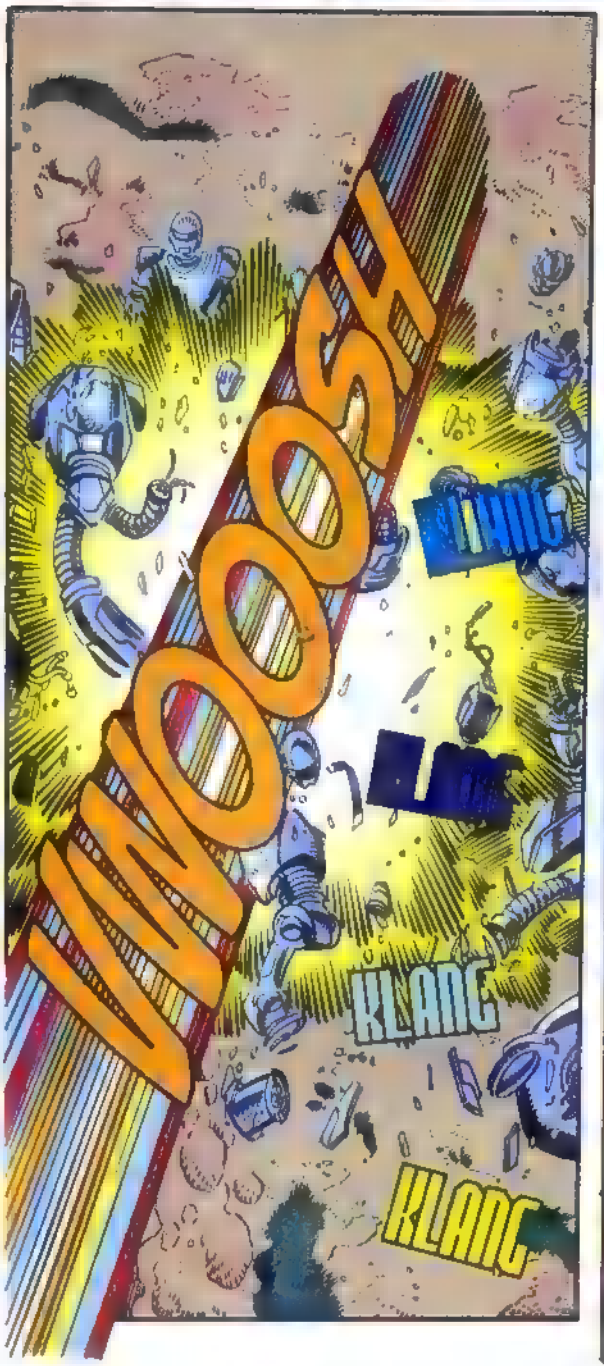

RARGH
PAIN IS OVER-WHELMING!
E, YOU INCOMPETENT FOOL! GO AFTER HIM!
YES MA'AM!
FOOL'S HEADING STRAIGHT FOR THE CASINO. THAT SHOULD SLOW HIM DOWN...
... AND CAUSE A FULL SCALE PANIC ON THE FLOOR.
OR NOT.
MAN, DES IS NOT GOING TO BE HAPPY WHEN I TELL HER THAT THING DISAPPEARED.
AND WHEN DESDEMONA SYNGE ISN'T HAPPY, NOBODY'S HAPPY.

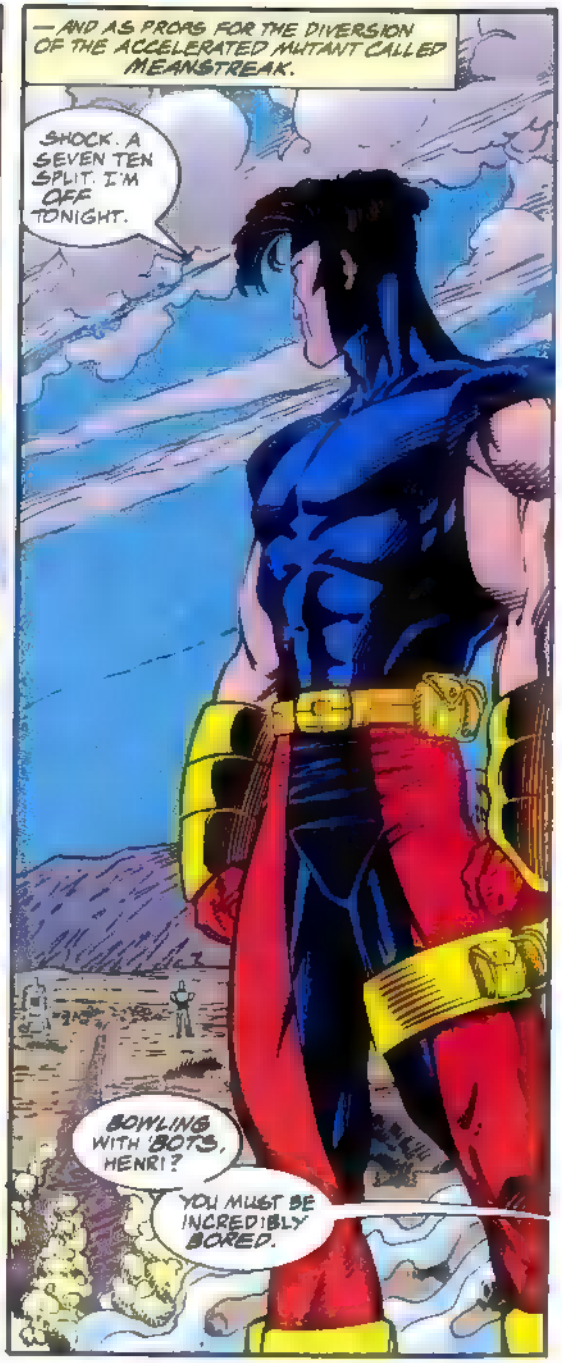
INSIDE THE SANGRE DE CRISTO MOUNTAIN COMPOUND WHICH THE REMAINING X-MEN HAVE CLAIMED AS A TEMPORARY HOME--
--TIMOTHY FITZGERALD FINDS HIMSELF ON THE RECEIVING END OF SHAKTI HADDAD'S BOOT.
YAAAHH!
WHUMP
EDDIE'S GONE, AND NOW KRYS. OUR NUMBER IS THINNING DAILY.
AND WE'LL NEED ALL THE HELP WE CAN GET TO MOVE AGAINST THE THEATRE OF PAIN.
AS I TOLD YOU BEFORE, I WILL STAND BY YOU.
THE LEGACY OF THE X-MEN IS FAR TOO NOBLE A DREAM TO LET DIE BY ATTRITION.
AND, UNLIKE KRYSTALIN, I HAVE NO REASON TO SEE MY FAMILY EVER AGAIN.
NICE KICK. DIDN'T THINK PHYSICAL COMBAT WAS YOUR STYLE.
WHUMP
WHUMP
AS A RUNAWAY IN HONG KONG, I LEARNED THE NECESSITY OF PERSONAL DEFENSE.
IT WAS A HARD LESSON THAT ALMOST COST ME MY LIFE.

IF YOU WERE ON THE STREET, YOU [redacted] THIS KIND OF FOOTWORK IS GREAT [redacted] SHOW—
--BUT IT WON'T GIVE YOU THE [redacted] FOR A REAL FIREFIGHT.
I TRUST A SHARP MIND AND SOUND BODY TO BE MY EDGE.
PROVE IT. REMEMBER, THE RULES OF THE GAME CHANGE CONSTANTLY.
BRIZZAK
AND I HOPE THAT YOU REMEMBER THAT AN IMPULSIVE MOVE MADE AGAINST THE WRONG OPPONENT CAN PROVE DISASTROUS.
FOR EXAMPLE, IT'S NOT WISE TO CHALLENGE ONE WITH THE ABILITY TO AFFECT YOUR NERVOUS SYSTEM.
OH YEAH.
WHOOOF!
WHUMP
IT MAKES YOU EXTREMELY VULNERABLE.
WHEN YOU RECOVER, WE CAN CONTINUE OUR DISCUSSION CONCERNING THE THEATRE.
FOR OBVIOUS REASONS, I THINK A FRONTAL ATTACK IS OUT OF THE QUESTION.
WHY, SHAKTI, I'M SURPRISED. UNDERNEATH THAT ICE QUEEN EXTERIOR, YOU MAY ACTUALLY HAVE A SENSE OF HUMOR.


AS THE PAIN SUBSIDES AND CONTROL OF MY BODY RETURNS, MY HOWLS OF AGONY BECOME FITS OF LAUGHTER.
I DOUBT DEAR DESDEMONA WOULD APPRECIATE THE DELICIOUS IRONY, BUT I OWE HER A DEBT OF GRATITUDE.
HER FEEBLE ATTEMPT AT NEURO-TECH TORTURE HAS AWAKENED ME TO A NEW WORLD OF POSSIBILITY.
ALCHEMAX CREATED ME TO BE THEIR TRICKS[redacted] GOD, AN IMPOSTOR HELD ON A LEASH.
BUT WHY SHOULD I BE CONSTRAINED BY THE CONVENTIONS OF A LONG DEAD RELIGION OR THE CORPORATE MACHINATIONS OF SCIENCE?
INSTEAD, I SHALL REVEL IN THE FREEDOM FROM FORM MY TRANSMUTABLE CELLULAR STRUCTURE ALLOWS ME.
IF I AM TO BE A MONSTER--
--I SHALL BE ONE OF MY OWN CHOOSING--
--FREE TO WREAK VENGEANCE AGAINST THOSE WHO HURT ME IN MY OWN SPECIAL WAY.
HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!


BACK IN THE NEW MEXICO MOUNTAINS, OUTSIDE ZHAO'S COMPOUND, A COLLECTION OF BROKEN SECURITY ROBOTS STAND FALLEN IN DISREPAIR.
NOW THEY SERVE ONLY AS A RUSTING REMINDER OF THE DRUG ADDLED PARANOIA THAT FELLED THE ONCE BRILLIANT MUTANT LEADER--


WHOOOSH
KLANG
KLANG


—AND AS PROPS FOR THE DIVERSION OF THE ACCELERATED MUTANT CALLED MEANSTREAK.
SHOCK. A SEVEN TEN SPLIT. I'M OFF TONIGHT.
BOWLING WITH 'BOTS, HENRI?
YOU MUST BE INCREDIBLY BORED.

LA LUNÁTICA?
DO YOU EVEN HAVE A REAL NAME--OR ARE YOU GENERICALLY "THE CRAZY WOMAN?"
I'LL ANSWER TO LUNA. [redacted] FIND THAT EASIER.
LOOK, YOU'VE MADE NO ATTEMPT TO HIDE [redacted]UR HOSTILITY [redacted]WARDS ME. I THOUGHT WE MIGHT CALL [redacted] TRUCE.
I'VE GOT NOTHING TO SAY TO YOU.
I'VE SEEN WHAT YOU'VE DONE TO T'M WITH YOUR PSYCHO-TRAUMATIC TOUCH
YOU WON'T HAVE THAT CHANCE WITH ME.
DON'T TURN YOUR BACK ON ME
GET YOUR HAND OFF ME
I DIDN'T COME TO FIGHT. BUT IF YOU WANT TO, I WILL GLADLY OBLIGE.
NO. I'M NOT GONNA PLAY THAT.
NO MATTER WHAT TIM SAYS, YOU'RE NOT ONE OF US.
WHOOSH

I TRIED, MEANSTREAK. REMEMBER THAT, BECAUSE I WILL NOT DO SO AGAIN.
KLANG
DON'T GET YOUR UNDERWEAR IN A BUNCH, SWEETIE. HE'S NOT WORTH IT.
WHO?
UGH!
SKRITCCH
NO ONE YOU KNOW, QUERIDA.
BUT MY BUSINESS WITH MISTER HUANG IS PRIVATE, AND I'D PREFER WE NOT BE INTERRUPTED.

RUNNING AWAY'S NO WAY TO SOLVE A PROBLEM.
TIM MAY BE ABLE TO FORGIVE HER FOR KIDNAPPING US FOR THE THEATRE OF PAIN™, BUT I CAN'T.
TIM'S GOING TO HAVE TO KNOW, IT'S EITHER HER OR--
SHE'S AN ANIMAL PRETENDING TO BE CIVILIZED. I DON'T TRUST HER.
*X-MEN 2099 #4 -- JOEY
LUNA?!?
LOOK AT THESE MARKS ON [redacted] BACK. SOMETHING HAD TO BE RAZOR SHARP TO CUT THROUGH [redacted] THICK SKIN
BUT THESE AREN'T MORE THAN SCRATCHES, SO I'D BET THE BLADE WAS POISONED.
HAS THE THEATRE COME BACK FOR HER?
OKAY, LUNA, WHILE I DON'T THINK YOU'D DO THE SAME FOR ME. I'M GOING TO GET HELP.
HANG ON. I'LL [redacted] BACK IN NO TIME.

FORGET THE TWIST, HENRI. SHE'S A BIG GIRL. SHE'LL SURVIVE
TIME TO WORRY ABOUT YOURSELF!
WASN'T PAYING ATTENTION.
THE SECURITY BOT JUST MORPHED INTO SOME SORT OF WERE CREATURE.
WHAT AM I UP AGAINST?
FAST AS EVER. YOU ALWAYS WERE POETRY IN MOTION.
OH, THE ADVANTAGE GIVEN TO YOU BY THAT CHROMOSOMAL ABNORMALITY.
BUT I'VE OVERCOME MY LIMITATIONS.
WATCH ME LEAVE YOU IN THE DUST.
CREATURE'S FAST. AND I'D ALMOST SWEAR HE WAS GROWLING ACTUAL SENTENCES--
--AS IF HE WERE GOADING ME TO FOLLOW HIM.
GONE.
WAIT--THAT BIRD OVERHEAD--IT'S THE SAME CREATURE--I KNOW IT.
AND IT'S DIVING AT ME--
GOOD. I CAN USE ITS DOWNWARD INERTIA AGAINST IT.
THWAK
SQUAWRK!

OWWW--THAT HURTS. CAN'T YOU TAKE A JOKE?
IS THAT ANY WAY TO WELCOME A STRANGER TO THESE PARTS?
GIVE US A SMILE, HENRI HUANG--AND DON'T LOOK SO CONFUSED.
HAD THIS BEEN A REAL EMERGENCY YOU'D BE WORM BAIT BY NOW--
--MY NAILS ARE DIPPED IN A HAITIAN BLOWFISH TOXIN THAT'LL REALLY CURE INSOMNIA.
THE BIRD'S TRANSFORMING BEFORE MY EYES--
--BECOMING SOMETHING HUMAN--I THINK--
THESE DAYS I CALL MYSELF HALLOWEEN JACK.
WHO ARE YOU? WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH ME?
I'VE GOT BIG, BIG PLANS FOR YOU, HENRI.

YOU CAN TAKE YOUR PLANS AND DEERSIX THEM, YOU CRAZY SON OF A--
CAREFUL, HENRI, SAVE THAT RIGHTEOUS ANGER FOR SOMEONE WITHOUT YOUR BEST INTERESTS AT HEART--
--BESIDES, YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT FOOLS RUSHING IN--
--THEY MISS THE MONOFILAMENT WIRE STRETCHED BETWEEN THE TREES.
WHOOA!
SUCH A BRILLIANT BOY, BUT SO PREDICTABLY IMPETUOUS.
UNGUH...
THAT'S WHY YOU NEED ME, HANK. I KNOW YOU BETTER THAN YOU KNOW YOURSELF.

WHAT IS THAT SUPPOSED TO... OH NO...
JORDAN BOONE?
IT TOOK YOU LONG ENOUGH, SHERLOCK. OH, I KNOW--THE HAIR IS DIFFERENT.
AND CALL ME JACK.
I LOST TRACK OF YOU DURING THE VALHALLA DEBACLE.
WHAT HAPPENED TO THE LOKI SCHTICK?
THE NORDIC ICONOGRAPHY BECAME TIRESOME. RELIGION CAN BE SUCH A CRUTCH.
NOW, I'M A WHOLE NEW PARADIGM. THE MAN OF TOMORROW--TODAY.
YOU'RE A MENTAL CASE. WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
REMEMBER BACK IN NEW YORK, WHEN YOU USED TO BE FUN--
--BEFORE YOU EXILED YOURSELF TO THE DESERT WITH THE REST OF THE MUTANT APOSTLES?
WELL, CALL ME CRAZY, BUT I THOUGHT WE MIGHT INDULGE IN A LITTLE NOSTALGIA--FOR OLD TIMES' SAKE.
GO OUT ON THE TOWN, GET A LITTLE WILD, RAISE SOME GOOD NATURED HELL...
...AND TAKE OVER LAS VEGAS.
NEXT: HIGH STAKES AND FREE RADICALS.